Shoreline
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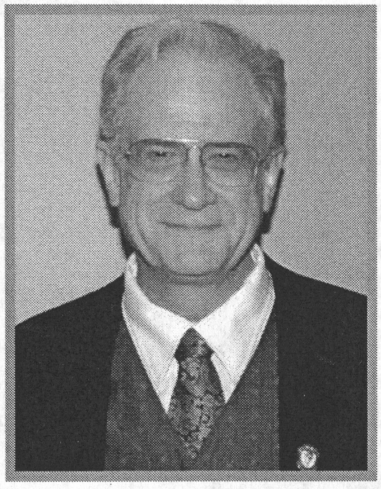
For the Members of the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University

Learning While Doing: Internships, Classes and Volunteerism

By Nabb Research Center Director G. Ray Thompson, Ph.D.



During the past several years, the University has become active in recognizing the value of engaging students in academic internships as a means to prepare them for the job market. Here at the Nabb Center, we take our educational mission seriously. This past semester, the Nabb Center worked with several interns who were provided, we think, with first-rate learning experiences. We have been fortunate in having students who are serious about wanting to develop skills that will prepare them for a career or for further education. We interview each student carefully and make a contract at the beginning of the semester about what we expect students to do. We look at their background preparation to see what skills they already have, which we help them refine, and we also look at how we might assist them in developing additional skills in their own disciplines.

We work one-on-one with each student. This involves a substantial amount of attention to detail on the part of each of our staff members, as each contributes to the overall mission of educating each intern. Although we have fewer full-time staff than we did two years ago, we have taken giant steps to provide a quality education for each of our interns, as mentoring and coaching are critical to the success of the experience. Once a student has created a specific product, several staff members vet the work. We work to show them how to improve (if necessary) the product they have just finished, all the while nurturing, encouraging and offering positive feedback where deserved. These are real-life "employment" experiences. To this point, all of our interns have excelled.

As part of the Blackwell Library system, we work with both faculty and students. The "enhanced" curriculum (four-credit classes have replaced the traditional three-credit classes in the Fulton School of Liberal Arts) encourages more classes to use our facilities for special research projects. By utilizing each of our spaces for multiple purposes, we are able to provide space for several classes to meet at the same time. Each room serves as reading room, classroom, lecture hall, exhibit gallery and meeting space for local organizations (at least five community organizations use our facilities regularly). In addition, we work with a number of specialized historical research courses each semester that are tasked with learning how to read, interpret and analyze documents and write coherent historical narratives. At least one graduate seminar and several upper- and lower-division classes meet here every semester regularly or to work with the staff on special projects. This preparation puts our students in a very competitive position for graduate school since they have had one or more semester-long projects at the Nabb Center that refine their skills of analysis and narration. We assist in a very important project—teaching students the craft of history. Students learn how to read 17th century handwriting, interpret maps, analyze newspapers of various periods, and how to "read" photographs, images and artifacts in an historical way.

One of the most significant steps that we have taken to expand our academic mission this past year is the addition of two galleries, a lecture hall, a meeting room and classrooms. We are now able to work with students in curating a series of major exhibits. Students do background research, assist in the preparation of storyboards, create background visuals and help select items used in the exhibit. So far this year, we have had several major exhibits—"The Taste of Salisbury" (curated at the Ward Museum's LeMay Gallery), "At the Whim of the Waters" (Smith Island photographs), and two Christmas exhibits—one on vintage postcards and a second on a "Victorian Child's Christmas," utilizing artifacts and photographs from our collections. In January, we mounted a highly successful exhibit, "Sources of Black Community: Family and Faith" (co-curated by board member L. Paul Morris Jr.). At present, we are preparing for the Women's History Month exhibit that will showcase mid-19th century Delmarva women and their lifestyles, as reflected in artifacts from our collections. In the fall, we also had a highly successful "Firefest" exhibit on the disastrous Salisbury fire of 1886. Each of these exhibits is multifaceted and requires much background preparation as well as considerable specialized talent on the part of the individuals involved in creating the exhibit.

In addition to the exhibits, we have at least one—often two—monthly events on historical or cultural subjects relating to the Eastern Shore. Each of these lectures is free and open to the public. Come to the Nabb Center to see what we are doing to assist the educational mission of our students and of the larger community as well!

A Week in the Life of the Nabb Center

By Donna Messick

The Nabb Research Center represents different things to different people. Everyone has his or her own interests, and the staff and volunteers at Nabb are happy to provide facilities and support to help each pursue his or her interests. One week in February seemed to present a microcosm of the activities within the Nabb Center and illustrates the diversity of activities that take place here.

As the week began, a local television station interviewed our director, Dr. G. Ray Thompson, and filmed our exhibit "Sources of Black Community: Family and Faith." The day continued with a Salisbury University history class in the Reading Room to learn how to research microfilm resources. The day ended with a meeting of our African-American history initiative committee to plan future public programs. The next day, the exhibit served as a field trip for a group of middle-school children from Worcester County.

On Wednesday evening we hosted a community panel discussing local Rosenwald schools, built in the early part of the 20th century to serve the African-American community. The panel was headed by local historian and Nabb volunteer Linda Duyer, and it included Newell Quinton, Edward Taylor and Barbara Purnell who spoke about their efforts to preserve the Rosenwald schools in San Domingo and Wetipquin in Wicomico County and in Berlin in Worcester County, respectively. The audience included community members interested in these projects, a regional historian researching the statewide Rosenwald school-building program and several Salisbury University students attending as part of a communication arts journalism project.

Our youngest group ever visited us on Thursday. Tiger Cub Scouts, ages 6-7, came to fulfill part of a badge requirement. Their focus was "Then and Now: A Beginner's Look at Family Life Many Years Ago." Dr. Thompson gathered a variety of historical artifacts to engage the group and discussed the ways these items were used in the past. Hopefully, some aspiring historians were intrigued.

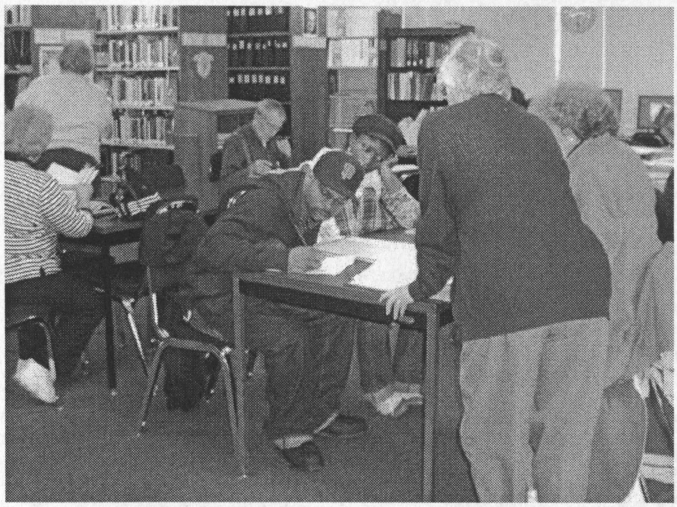
The weekend did not mean the end of Nabb's outreach. On Saturday, Dr. Thompson gave a presentation to the Sussex County Genealogical Society in the library at Rehoboth Beach, DE, about early immigration to Delmarva. On Sunday, we provided a tour of our facilities for the Small Museum Association Conference.

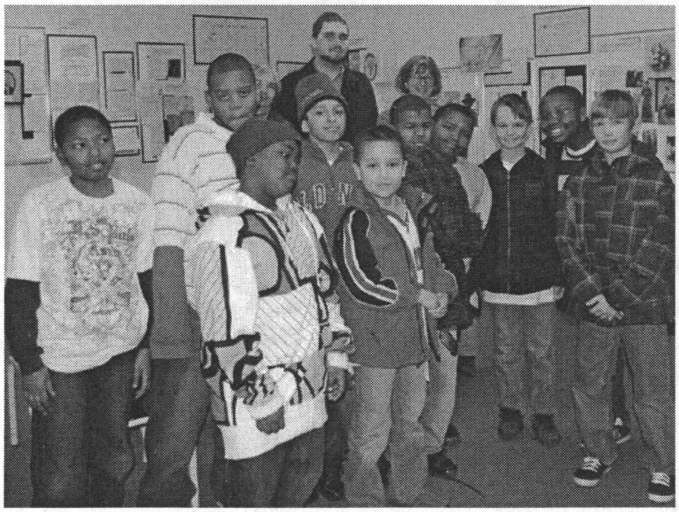
The following week included an interview with Dr. Thompson at Comcast, and we provided meeting space for two other community organizations, PAC-14 television and the Wicomico Environmental Trust.

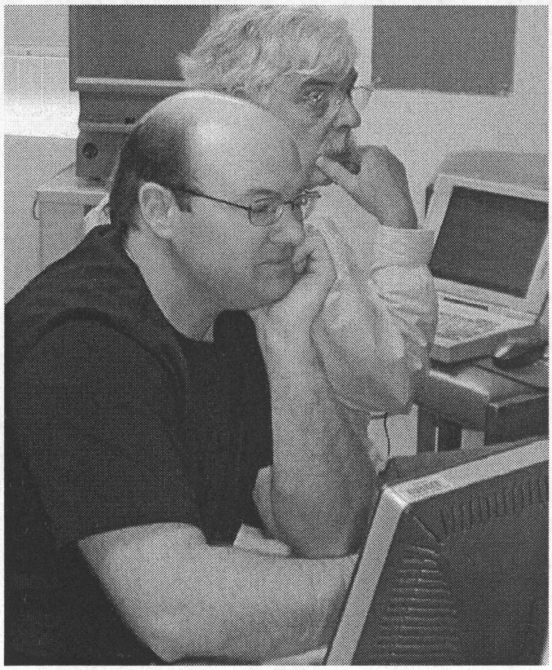
Throughout the week, the regular, daily activities within the Nabb Center were also taking place. Reading Room researchers included students from Salisbury University and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore,

numerous community patrons pursuing interests in family or local history, and SU graduate students working on individual projects. Our staff helped gather information and images for Maryland Public Television and local television stations and assisted individual researchers working on World War II oral histories, local agriculture, poultry industries and Colonial education. All the while planning continued for our fundraising event at Bordeleau, other public events for the spring and our women's history exhibit in March. Ongoing projects include the transcription of original church records and the processing of archival, artifact and monograph collections. On a daily basis, we also oversee several student interns who are learning and honing skills to aid them in their future careers.

So, you see that things are never dull at the Nabb Center. The few days described here give insight into the variety of ways the director, staff and volunteers provide assistance to researchers and share their knowledge and love of history with others.



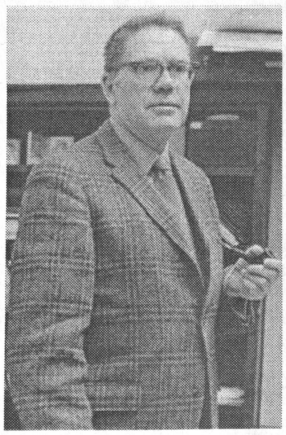




Spotlight on the Collection: Wroten's "Delmarva Heritage Series"

by Archivist David Ranzan

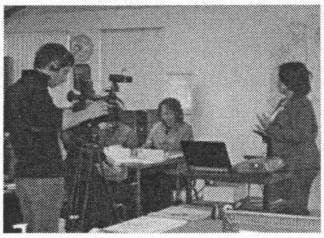
A distinguished historian, Dr. William H. Wroten Jr. came to the Maryland State Teachers College at Salisbury in 1955 and served as the chair of the History Department for 25 years. During his career, Wroten also served as director of graduate studies, helped to establish the Somerset County Historical Society, and served as president of the Wicomico Historical Society and the Dorchester County Historical Society. As an early supporter of the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture, he graciously donated his personal collection of local maps and papers to the center. Among the papers were a group of articles authored by Wroten that appeared in *The Salisbury Daily Times* from 1958 to 1964, under the header of "Delmarva Heritage Series," covering the history and customs of the Eastern Shore. To enhance their accessibility to the patrons, 42 of the articles have been digitally transcribed and put online. They are located on the Nabb Research Center's Web site at http://nabbhistory.salisbury.edu/resources/wroten/default.htm.



Nabb News

Sources of Black Community: Family and Faith

The exhibit "Sources of Black Community: Family and Faith" has generated a flurry of activity. It has been filmed for a documentary for PBS, and local television stations have featured the exhibit on newscasts. It has been so popular that we have extended the exhibit into May. Through the exhibit we examine the roles that religious institutions and education played in the growth of a black middle class on the Eastern Shore and demonstrate the wide variety of resources available in conducting research into African-American history. Also filmed for PBS was the well-attended African-American family history workshop, led by Kimberly Conway Dumpson. It was gratifying to see families attending the workshop together and to hear their stories.



Nabb Volunteer Wins the Tee O'Connor Professional Award

Historian and author Linda Duyer won the Tee O'Conner Professional Award from the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council for her research, writing and resource-gathering on African-American history on the Eastern Shore. Duyer has worked hard to foster our Black History Resource Initiative, and we could not have launched this very successful program without her hard work. Words are not enough to thank Duyer for all that she has done for the Nabb Center; the award could not have gone to a more deserving individual.

Events & Exhibits

Exhibit: "Sources of Black Community: Family and Faith"

Nabb Research Center Gallery, through May 14, 1-4 p.m., MWF, or contact the Nabb Research Center at 410-543-6312 for an appointment.

Presentation: "African-American Soldiers in WWI," by Salisbury University Professor Stephen C. Gehnrich

Wednesday, March 10, 7 p.m.
Nabb Research Center Gallery

Learn what roles African Americans played in the ultimate victory, and how their service was viewed in post-war America. This event is free and open to the public.

Exhibit: "A Portrait of an Eastern Shore Woman"

Nabb Research Center Gallery, March 22-May 18, 1-4 p.m., MWF, or contact the Nabb Research Center at 410-543-6312 for an appointment.

Learn about the changing conditions in which women found themselves on the Eastern Shore during the 1800s. This exhibit is free and open to the public.

Presentation: "An Abundant and Fruitful Land: An Overview of Human Use of the Chesapeake through History" with Dr. Henry J. Miller

Wednesday April 7, 7 p.m.
Wicomico Room, Guerrieri University Center

The Nabb Research Center, in cooperation with the Maryland Humanities Council, presents the 2010 Wilcomb Washburn Distinguished Lecture in American History. Using evidence ranging from fish bones to shipping records, this lecture evaluates human use and impact on the Chesapeake from the perspectives of archaeology and history. This lecture is made possible, in part, through the generous support of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council, and is free and open to the public.

Event: "Men of Color to Arms"

Saturday, April 10, 2-4 p.m.
Nabb Research Center Gallery

Professor Clara Small and the Reverend David Briddell comment on their book, *Men of Color to Arms: Manumitted Slaves and Free Blacks from the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Who Served in the Civil War.* Book signing to follow. This event is free and open to the public.

Event: "Nabb Research Center Annual Fundraising Event"

Saturday May 1
Home of Tom Shelton

Owner and vintner, at Bordeleau Vineyards and Winery. Call 410-543-6312 for information.